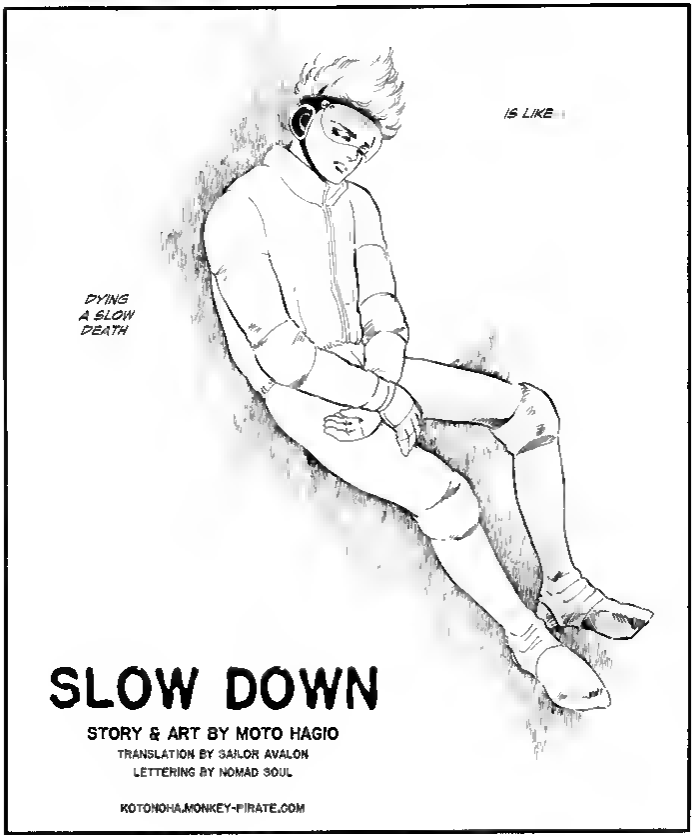
I'M BEING USED IN AN EXPERIMENT.
THIS IS A LABORATORY.
THE LABO-RATORY IS UNDER-GROUND,
IN OTHER WORDS, I'M A GUINEA PIG.
AND IT'S COMPLETELY SILENT.
THERE ARE NO CLOCKS AND NO WINDOWS.
AND I CAN'T TELL DAY FROM NIGHT
THE LIGHTING IS DIM IN HERE,
-I WONDER HOW MANY DAYS HAVE PASSED?
THERE IS NOTHING.

SITTING IN THIS EMPTY ROOM, DOING NOTHING,

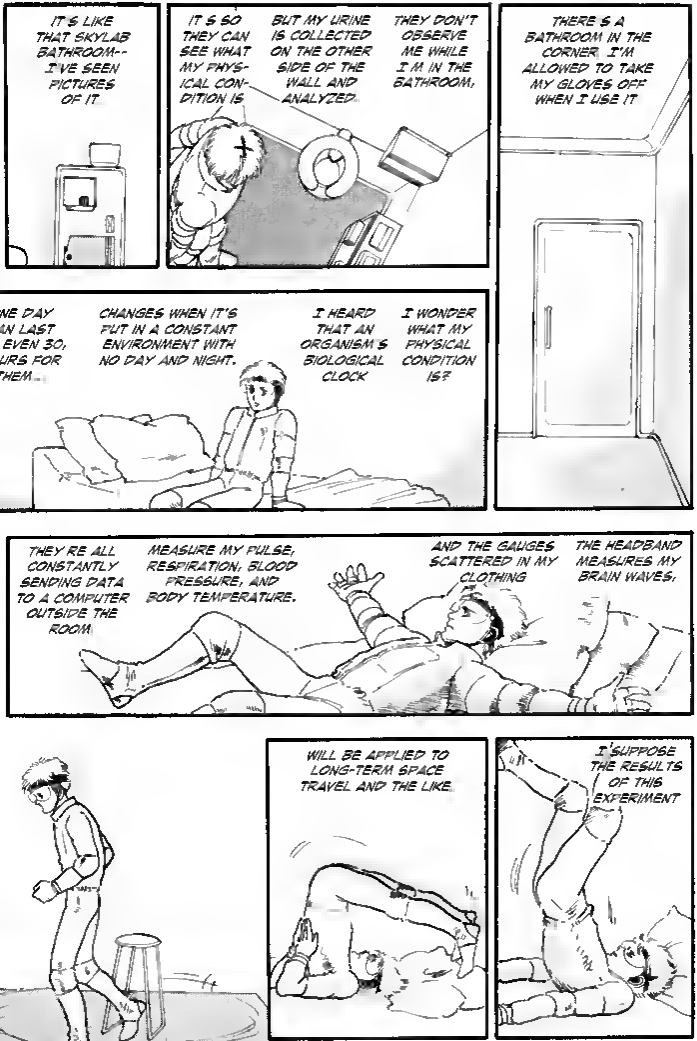

IS LIKE
DYING A SLOW DEATH
SLOW DOWN
STORY & ART BY MOTO HAGIO
TRANSLATION BY SAILOR AVALON
LETTERING BY NOMAD SOUL
KOTONOHA.MONKEY-PIRATE.COM

SLOW DOWN

WHEN I PRESS THE BUTTON, THE PANEL OPENS FIVE MINUTES LATER AND A TRAY EMERGES.
IT'S LIKE AIRPLANE FOOD.
THERE'S A WHITE PANEL NEXT TO THE WHITE TABLE.
THE GLOVES I WEAR DAMPEN THE STIMULI MY FINGERS RECEIVE.
MY EARS ARE BLOCKED OFF, SO I CAN'T HEAR MUCH OF ANYTHING.
AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, THERE'S A CAMERA ON THE WALL THROUGH WHICH I'M OBSERVED.

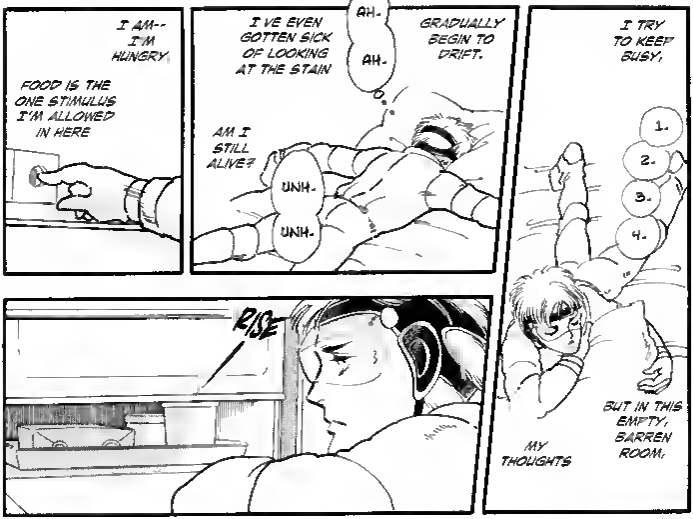
I'M SURE THE HIDDEN MIC PICKED THAT UP
I LIKE THIS STAIN.
MY GLASSES ARE DELIBERATELY CLOUDED, SO THE STAIN LOOKS BLURRY TO ME
I WIPED IT UP, BUT THERE'S STILL A STAIN THE FLOOR IS COVERED WITH FELT
I REMEMBER THAT THEY TOLD ME TO COUNT SOMETIMES
0.
1.
2.
3.
4.
SOMETIMES I COUNT TO 120
99.
100.
101.
...
SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE ROOM HAS A STOPWATCH.
IT'S A RHYTHM-RELATED EXPERIMENT -- WHETHER I CAN COUNT TO 120 IN EXACTLY 120 SECONDS
ONCE YOUR ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE DROPS DOWN BELOW A CERTAIN LEVEL, YOU START HALLUCINATING -THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY USUALLY HAPPENS IN THIS EXPERIMENT.
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING YET, THOUGH
SOMETIMES I'M NOT SURE WHETHER I COUNTED ALL THE WAY TO 120.
I'M LOSING MY ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE
...
HOW HIGH DID I JUST GO?
SIGH

SLOW DOWN


IT'S LIKE THAT SKYLAB BATHROOM-- I'VE SEEN PICTURES OF IT
IT'S SO THEY CAN SEE WHAT MY PHYSICAL CONDITION IS
BUT MY URINE IS COLLECTED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL AND ANALYZED.
THEY DON'T OBSERVE ME WHILE I'M IN THE BATHROOM,
THERE'S A BATHROOM IN THE CORNER. I'M ALLOWED TO TAKE MY GLOVES OFF WHEN I USE IT
ONE DAY CAN LAST 25, EVEN 30, HOURS FOR THEM...
CHANGES WHEN IT'S PUT IN A CONSTANT ENVIRONMENT WITH NO DAY AND NIGHT.
I HEARD THAT AN ORGANISM'S BIOLOGICAL CLOCK
I WONDER WHAT MY PHYSICAL CONDITION IS?
THEY'RE ALL CONSTANTLY SENDING DATA TO A COMPUTER OUTSIDE THE ROOM.
MEASURE MY PULSE, RESPIRATION, BLOOD PRESSURE, AND BODY TEMPERATURE.
AND THE GAUGES SCATTERED IN MY CLOTHING
THE HEADBAND MEASURES MY BRAIN WAVES,
WILL BE APPLIED TO LONG-TERM SPACE TRAVEL AND THE LIKE.
I SUPPOSE THE RESULTS OF THIS EXPERIMENT

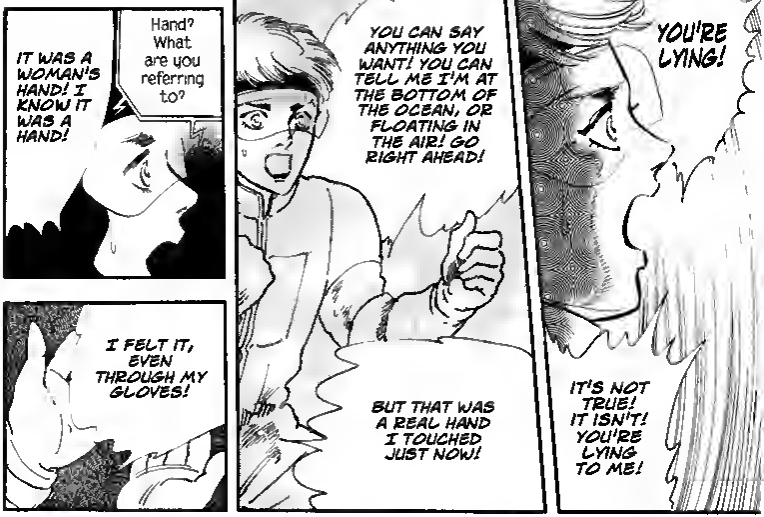
...
Can you continue with the experiment, Lloyd?
IT'S AN ELECTRONIC VOICE
HUH ?!
Lloyd George
!
Very well. We'll continue the experiment.
Do you have any recollection of the name Lloyd George?
BUT IT'S NOT MY NAME.
I DO.
MY NAME IS LOUIS NELL.
...
THEY WANT TO SEE IF THEY CAN TRICK ME.
THEY'RE TRYING TO SEE IF I'M FAR GONE ENOUGH TO RESPOND TO SUGGESTION.
...
YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU!
GET A GRIP! THIS IS ALL PART OF THE EXPERIMENT.
YES, I KNOW!
BUT WHAT IF I'M REALLY LLOYD GEORGE?
I THINK I'M LOUIS NELL.
LLOYD GEORGE, OR LOUIS NELL?
AM I...

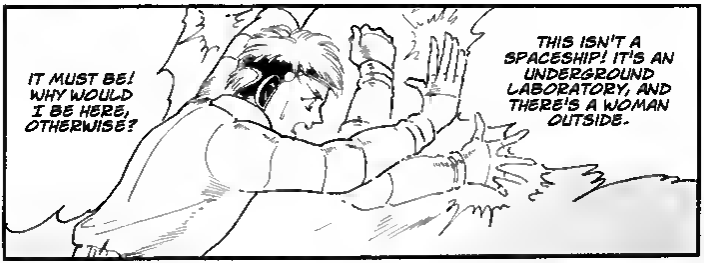
SLOW DOWN

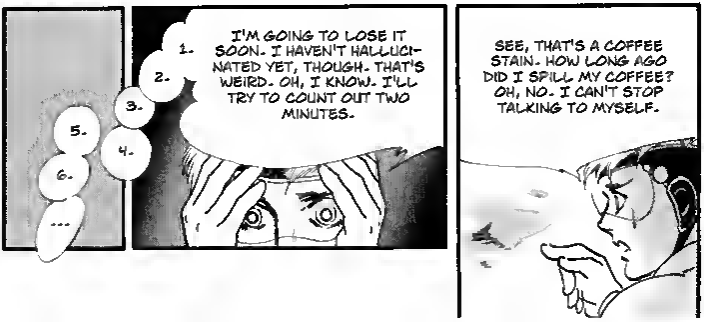

I AM-- I'M HUNGRY.
FOOD IS THE ONE STIMULUS I'M ALLOWED IN HERE
I'VE EVEN GOTTEN SICK OF LOOKING AT THE STAIN
AM I STILL ALIVE?
UNH.
UNH.
AH.
AH.
GRADUALLY BEGIN TO DRIFT.
I TRY TO KEEP BUSY,
1.
2.
3.
4.
MY THOUGHTS
BUT IN THIS EMPTY, BARREN ROOM,
RISE
RATTLE

AH!
GRAB
SLIP
!
SLAM!
Please excuse our mistake Lloyd George We'll continue the experiment
A HAND!
WAS THAT PART OF THE EXPERI-MENT TOO ?
WHAT WAS THAT?
THAT WAS A HAND!
...
SNICKER

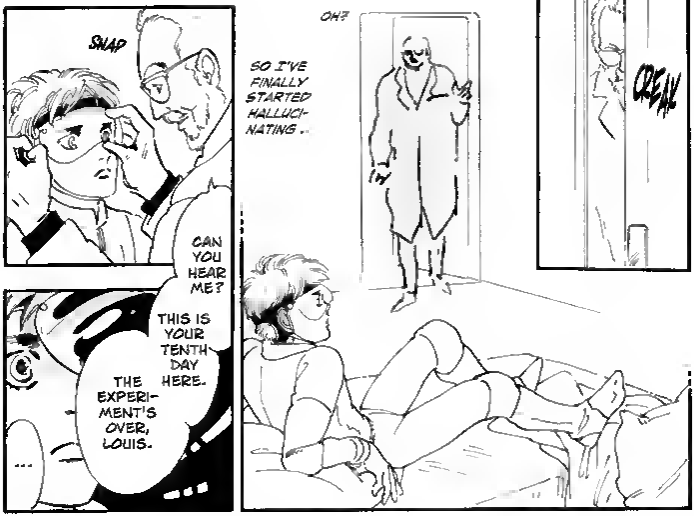
YOU CAN'T TRICK ME ANYMORE!
MY NAME IS ROY NELL.
NO, IT'S LOUIS. LOUIS NELL!
THIS IS AN EXPERIMENT.
THERE ARE RESEARCHERS AND OTHER STAFF OUTSIDE THIS ROOM.
A HA HA!
SNICKER SNICKER
A MISTAKE?
WHAT, THE PANEL MADE A MISTAKE?
No, Roy Nell. This isn't an experiment
You alone narrowly managed to escape on this spaceship
Nuclear warfare has destroyed the Earth
You're inside a spaceship
WAR-FARE ...
...

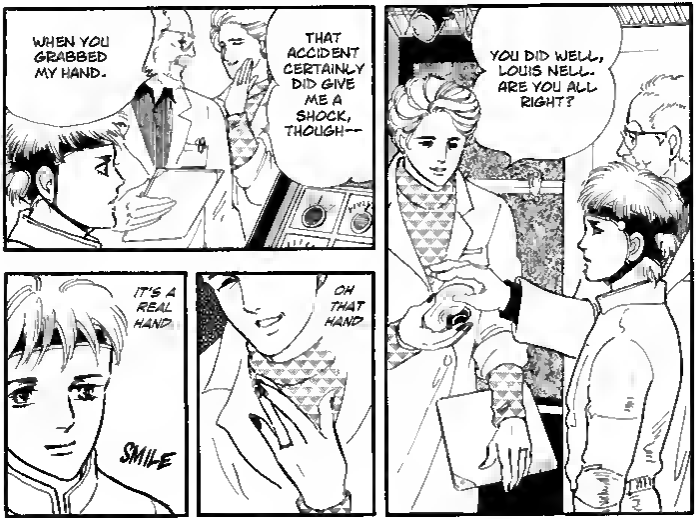

IT WAS A WOMAN'S HAND! I KNOW IT WAS A HAND!
Hand? What are you referring to?
I FELT IT, EVEN THROUGH MY GLOVES!
YOU CAN SAY ANYTHING YOU WANT! YOU CAN TELL ME I'M AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN, OR FLOATING IN THE AIR! GO RIGHT AHEAD!
BUT THAT WAS A REAL HAND I TOUCHED JUST NOW!
YOU'RE LYING!
IT'S NOT TRUE! IT ISN'T! YOU'RE LYING TO ME!


IT MUST BE! WHY WOULD I BE HERE, OTHERWISE?
THIS ISN'T A SPACESHIP! IT'S AN UNDERGROUND LABORATORY, AND THERE'S A WOMAN OUTSIDE.


1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
...
I'M GOING TO LOSE IT SOON. I HAVEN'T HALLUCINATED YET, THOUGH. THAT'S WEIRD. OH, I KNOW. I'LL TRY TO COUNT OUT TWO MINUTES.
SEE, THAT'S A COFFEE STAIN. HOW LONG AGO DID I SPILL MY COFFEE? OH, NO. I CAN'T STOP TALKING TO MYSELF.

SLOW DOWN


SNAP
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
THIS IS YOUR TENTH DAY HERE.
THE EXPERIMENT'S OVER, LOUIS.
...
SO I'VE FINALLY STARTED HALLUCINATING..
OH?
CREAK

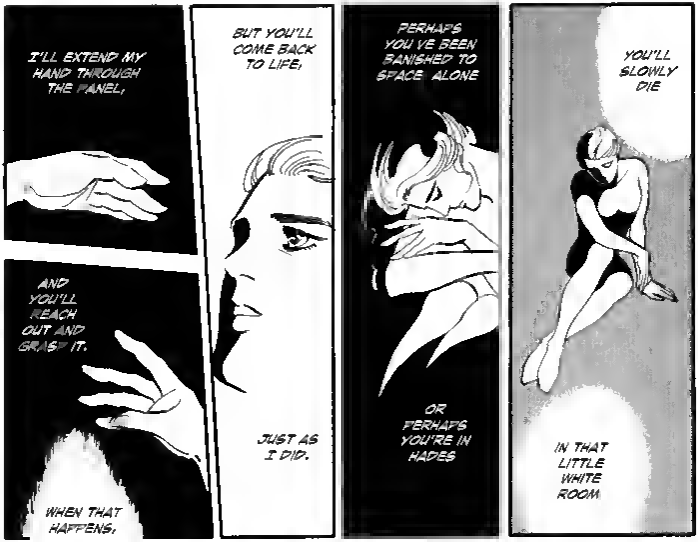

WHEN YOU GRABBED MY HAND.
THAT ACCIDENT CERTAINLY DID GIVE ME A SHOCK, THOUGH--
YOU DID WELL, LOUIS NELL. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S A REAL HAND.
SMILE
OH THAT HAND

YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON WHO'S LASTED TEN DAYS
IN THIS SORT OF SENSORY DEPRIVATION EXPERIMENT.
YOU KEPT YOUR CONCENTRATION UP, TOO.
I DIDN'T HALLUCINATE, AND I DIDN'T GET C-... CAUGHT UP... IN ANY OF YOUR TRICKS, RIGHT?
JUST ONE.
THE HAND WASN'T REAL...?
NO, NO.
IT WAS THE COFFEE STAIN.
YOU NEVER DROPPED THE CUP. THERE WAS NEVER A STAIN THERE.
GO ON AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE ROOM LATER. YOU'LL SEE.
...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPERIMENT, LOUIS NELL.
YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO THE SURFACE AND TAKE IT EASY FOR A WHILE.
THE REAL WORLD!

OKAY, I'M GOING TO GO WATCH SOME TV NOW! AND LISTEN TO SOME RECORDS!
AND MEET UP WITH SOME GIRLS! AND GO TO THE DISCO!
I'VE GOT TEN DAYS TO MAKE UP FOR!
I'VE LIVED IN THIS CITY FOR A WHILE, BUT IT FEELS LIKE I'M SEEING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.
WELL, IT WAS A SENSORY DEPRIVATION EXPERIMENT.
I'M SURE I'LL BE BACK TO NORMAL IN NO TIME
RIGHT FOOT, LEFT FOOT.
I HAVEN'T SEEN IT IN TEN DAYS!
BOY'S
I'M A LITTLE GIDDY...
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
LOUIS NELL.
ARE YOU LISTENING?
TEN DAYS OF STIMULI THAT I MISSED!
OH ...
WHAT'S WRONG? LOOK AT ME!
DID YOU HIT YOUR HEAD DURING THAT EXPERIMENT?
WHY ARE YOU SMILING LIKE THAT?
COME ON, LET'S DANCE!
OH ...
OH ...

ENOUGH WITH THE SCI-FI STUFF, LOUIS!
ARE YOU REALLY AN EARTHLING ...?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, LOUIS?!
HM?
HEY ...
IS THIS REALLY EARTH...?
IT'S LIKE THIS IS ALL FAKE
FEELS REAL...
NOTHING...
IT'S SO WEIRD...
WHAT'S WRONG, LOUIS NELL?!
IT'S JUST LIKE THAT EMPTY ROOM!
THERE'S NOTHING CONCRETE HERE.
IS REAL?
HOW MUCH OF THIS WORLD
I'M ALONE, AND I'M DYING.
NOTHING IS REAL.

-A REAL HAND!
SOMEONE REACH OUT THEIR HAND TO ME!
IT'S AN EASY TASK.
WOULD YOU HANDLE THE RECORDING, LOUIS NELL?
MY HEART IS POUNDING!
IT'S A FIRST, ISN'T IT?
YOU'RE REALLY GOING IN YOURSELF, MADAME DIRECTOR?
I WONDER HOW MANY DAYS I'LL LAST!
I'LL GO INTO THE ROOM TOMORROW.
ALL RIGHT.
YOU JUST NEED TO PREPARE THE FOOD, MEDICINE... THINGS OF THAT NATURE.
ALL RIGHT,
I'LL DO IT.


I'LL EXTEND MY HAND THROUGH THE PANEL,
AND YOU'LL REACH OUT AND GRASP IT.
WHEN THAT HAPPENS,
BUT YOU'LL COME BACK TO LIFE,
JUST AS I DID.
PERHAPS YOU'VE BEEN BANISHED TO SPACE ALONE
OR PERHAPS YOU'RE IN HADES
YOU'LL SLOWLY DIE
IN THAT LITTLE WHITE ROOM

WE'LL BOTH
AWAKEN FROM OUR ETERNAL SLEEP.
«THE END»
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